

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application.

Listing Of Claims:

Claims 1-24 (canceled).

Claim 25 (currently amended): A method of preparing a substantially air occlusive integral composite membrane comprising:

(a) providing a polymeric support having a pair of opposing sides and a microstructure of micropores having between the opposing sides, and the opposing sides defining a thickness of at most one mil;

(b) applying ion exchange resin solution to each of the opposing sides ~~major surface~~ of said polymeric support;

whereby said micropores are sufficiently filled with ion exchange resin to form an air occlusive integral composite membrane which has an ionic conductance rate of at least 5.1 $\mu\text{mhos/min}$.

Claim 26 (original): The method of claim 25, wherein said step (b) includes at least two successive applications of said ion exchange resin solution.

Claim 27 (original): The method of claim 25, wherein said step (b) includes at least two successive applications of said ion exchange resin solution, each followed by a drying step.

Claim 28 (original): The method of claim 25, wherein said step (b) includes at least three successive applications of said ion exchange resin solution, each followed by a drying step.

Claim 29 (original): The method of claim 25, wherein said providing step (a) comprises providing as said polymeric support a polyolefin support.

Claim 30 (original): The method of claim 25, wherein said providing step (a) comprises providing as said polymeric support a fluorinated polymer support.

Claim 31 (original): The method of claim 25, wherein said providing step (a) comprises providing as said polymeric support a chlorinated polymer support.

Claim 32 (original): The method of claim 25, wherein said support is expanded polytetrafluoroethylene.

Claim 33 (original): The method of claim 25, wherein said ion exchange resin is perfluorinated sulfonic acid resin.

Claim 34 (original): The method of claim 25, wherein said support is expanded polytetrafluoroethylene, wherein said ion exchange resin is perfluorinated sulfonic acid resin, and wherein said step (b) includes at least two successive applications of said ion exchange resin solution, each followed by a drying step.

Claim 35 (new): The method of claim 25, wherein said ion exchange resin solution comprises a surfactant.

Claim 36 (new): The method of claim 35, wherein said surfactant has a molecular weight greater than 100.

Claim 37 (new): The method of claim 35, further comprising removing said surfactant from the air occlusive integral composite membrane.

Claim 38 (new): The method of claim 25, wherein said step (b) includes simultaneously applying said ion exchange resin solution to each of the opposing sides of said polymeric support.

Claim 39 (new): The method of claim 25, further comprising boiling the air occlusive integral composite membrane in a swelling agent under pressure ranging from 0 to 20 atmospheres absolute.

Claim 40 (new): The method of claim 25, wherein a thickness of the air occlusive integral composite membrane is substantially the same thickness as said polymeric support.

Claim 41 (new): The method of claim 25, wherein the air occlusive integral composite membrane has an ion exchange content of at least 9.81 grams per square meter of membrane.

Claim 42 (new): The method of claim 27, wherein said step (b) includes removing excess ion exchange resin solution from at least one of the opposing sides of the support prior to said drying step.